

# Christmas Gifts

## Redheaded Play Pals

WE HAD six kids and my husband, Tom, was a letter carrier, so our children didn't get a lot of stuff for Christmas in the 1950s.

Each child could ask for one big item from The Wish Book—Sears, Roebuck's holiday toy catalog. Since our kids could choose only one special thing, each year's Christmas catalog became worn and finger-marked.

My daughter, who now lives in Sausalito, California, picked out Patti Playpal one year. The doll was big, a real thrill for her.

—Eleanor C., Newton, Massachusetts

## Selfless "Santa"

I LONGED for a two-wheeler bicycle one Christmas during the Depression, but my parents had told me it was out of the question since Daddy had lost his business.

On Christmas morning, my parents and brother and I crept downstairs to see if Santa had come. When Daddy turned on the lights, I gasped as my eyes fell on the shining, sparkling two-wheeler that I had dreamed of. I was overwhelmed with joy.

A year or two later, when I had come to the conclusion that my parents had been Santa all along, I learned the true story of my wonderful two-wheeler.

My brother Jack had been earning his own money on a magazine route and had earned enough points to get a sturdy wagon for his deliveries.

My precious brother had seen just the kind of bike I wanted in his gift-catalog book. He was only about 10 years old, but with

complete unselfishness, he turned in all of his hard-earned bonus coupons for my two-wheeler.

Tears well in my eyes when I think of that gift and my brother's act of love for me.

—Eileen A., Beaverton, Oregon

### **Conversation Pieces**

BY MY PULLING a cord at the side of her neck, my Shrinkin' Violette doll would magically utter one of eight phrases while wiggling her pink mouth and fluttering her long eyelashes.

She had long, blond hair like me, but the reason I loved her most was because she was shy like me. I agreed with her sentiments: "I'm afraid of noisy boys" and "People are oh, so big!" and "I have butterflies in my tummy!"

Talking toys must have been the fad then, because that same Christmas, my brother Frank received a talking Cecil, from TV's The Beany and Cecil Show. Cecil was a green, plush hand puppet whose red felt tongue would flop around as he lisped, "I'm Cecil, the seasick sea serpent."

My sister received a plush, talking Larry the Lion who opened his mouth while roaring wisecracks.

We three kids held many conversations among our talking friends. Larry declared, "I'm a friendly lion!" Violette then answered, "I'd like to be your friend!" And Cecil would make us laugh with his own goofy laugh.

How can I be sure of the words? We still have our toys!

—Sue W., Greenfield, Massachusetts

## **Santa Missed a Letter**

I RECEIVED a life-size doll for Christmas in 1941 or '42. On the outside of the box was printed "Mary Lu Doll." I thought, Wow, Santa made a doll just for me. Never mind that he misspelled Lou.

I also had a "mama-papa" doll. When I sat the doll up and leaned her forward, she said, "Pa-Pa," and when I laid her down flat on her back, she said, "Ma-Ma."

So much fun was had with these dolls. Our daughter even played with them when she was very young.

—Mary Lou D., Lafayette, Indiana